

**Manitou Conference Minute for Right Relations:
'Walking with our Sisters'**

In January 2014, two car loads from North Bay Presbytery went to Parry Sound to see the commemorative art installation called 'Walking with our Sisters.' There we saw 1,700 beautiful and unfinished moccasin tops created to represent the unfinished lives of missing and murdered Aboriginal girls and women.

In May 2014, the RCMP revealed there were 1,181 reported cases of aboriginal women having either been killed or gone missing between 1980 and 2012. These new figures provide a startling picture of violence among a vulnerable segment of Canadian society. RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson stated that there is an overrepresentation of Aboriginal women amongst missing and murdered women in Canada.

So who are these women whose lives are unfinished? ... remember Loretta Saunders? She was a 26 year old Inuit woman, writing her university honours thesis on missing and murdered Aboriginal women when she was murdered in New Brunswick in February 2014.

Remember Tina Fontaine? ... she was a 15 year old teen found in a bag at the bottom of the Red River in Winnipeg last month. Almost half of women who have been murdered since 1980 in Manitoba are Aboriginal.

First Nation leaders, all the provincial premiers and the United Nations are calling on the Federal Government for an inquiry into this epidemic of violence. The Harper Government continues to resist. The Native Women's Association have collected 23,000 signatures on a petition calling for the inquiry. To add your name, go to: www.nwac.ca

Public vigils will also take place across the country on October 4 to remember these women and girls, aunties, sisters, cousins & grandmothers. Find one near you or participate in the virtual candlelight vigil at: www.october4th.ca

What else can we do? As people of faith who cherish life, we can continue to pray that the world will become a more just and gentle place for all people. May it be so

*Researched & written by Rev Teresa Jones on behalf of
the Manitou Conference Right Relations Group, Sept 2014*